

VZCZCXRO2962
OO RUEHPA
DE RUEHUJA #0165/01 0431931
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 121916Z FEB 10
FM AMEMBASSY ABUJA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0274
INFO ECOWAS COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS IMMEDIATE
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE 0083

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 000165

SIPDIS
STATE FOR AF/FO, AF/W, AF/RSA, AF/PDPA, DRL, INR/AA
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE PASS TO AMEMBASSY MALABO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2020/01/26
TAGS: PGOV PREL PINR SOCI KCRM KPAO EAGR NI
SUBJECT: NIGERIAN NUGGETS -- FEBRUARY 12, 2010

CLASSIFIED BY: James P. McAnulty, Political Counselor, U.S. Embassy
Abuja, Political Section; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

¶1. (U) Mission Nigeria provides the following compilation of recent political, economic, and social developments not previously reported.

WESTERN NAVY COMMAND CONTENT WITH CIVILIAN RULE

¶12. (C) U.S. Navy Frigate "Samuel B. Roberts" arrived in Lagos November 11 for week-long training exercises with the Nigerian Navy as part of the Africa Partnership Station (APS). Nigerian Western Navy Command Chief of Operations Rear Admiral James Oluwole told PolMilOff that a poll of Nigerian Navy (NN) sailors would show that "eighty percent" of them have absolutely no desire for a return to military rule. He stated that he saw no threat of a coup from within the Navy, and he believed that Chief of Defense Staff Air Marshal Dike and Chief of the Army Staff Lieutenant General Dambazau had done an effective job at containing any potential threat from the Army. He praised their quick actions in imposing barracks restrictions and telling subordinates that a coup did not serve the interests of the military or Nigeria. Oluwole lamented that the Nigerian Government (GON) undervalued the Nigerian Navy, despite "substantial maritime threats against Nigeria's oil industry," including piracy and Niger Delta militancy. He asked the USG to assist in building NN riverine capability and complained that the Army sought to do the same. When asked about U.S. Africa Command, Oluwole said he understood its intent and believed increased engagement would benefit NN capacity and readiness.

NEW TENSIONS IN JOS

¶13. (SBU) Authorities stepped up security in Jos, the capital of Plateau State, following a clash the week of February 8 between a group of Fulani herdsmen and locals. Fifteen people reportedly died during the fighting, according to press reports. In mid January, over 300 people perished and an estimated 30,000 persons

suffered displacement after days of communal violence in the city. News of this latest fighting sent residents scrambling for safety, afraid that a full-scale crisis would resume. Though details of this latest occurrence remain sketchy, authorities increased the number military and police in Jos to enforce the 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. daily curfew. The Conflict Mitigation and Management Regional Councils established by USAID-Nigeria continued to conduct advocacy visits to regional leaders and to develop a plan to address fundamental issues that contributed to violence.

VICTIMS OF JOS CRISIS STILL IN DIRE STRAITS

¶4. (C) According to an International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) official, 6,900 internally displaced persons remained in camps in Jos. Neighboring Bauchi State, to the north of Plateau State, now holds 8,900 persons who fled the Jos violence and who are now expected to resettle outside Plateau State. ICRC officials struggled to provide food and water to these individuals, many of whom fled their homes 26 days ago and remain too afraid to return. As of February 10, authorities held 208 suspects in Abuja, down from over 300 arrested during the violence, releasing the remainder. Civil society aid groups have supplied food, water, and

ABUJA 00000165 002 OF 002

medical attention to these suspects.

¶5. (C) Plateau State Governor Jang claimed to PolCouns and PolOff February 8 that authorities in Abuja had intentionally moved suspects from Jos to Abuja, just as they had done after the November 2008 riots, to keep them immune from prosecution and to prevent police based in Jos from conducting thorough investigations. He alleged that such investigations would have revealed that certain senior officials in Abuja, possibly including National Security Advisor Abdul Sarki Mukhtar, had instigated the violence. He discounted Nigeria Police Force claims that overcrowding in Jos detention centers had forced police to transfer the prisoners.

NEW VIOLENCE HITS GOMBE STATE

¶6. (SBU) Two communal clashes occurred in Gombe State on February 10, leaving 80 people injured and 400 displaced, according to an ICRC contact. Displaced persons, he said, required immediate relocation to a camp. The clash continued a feud between two village groups that erupted two years ago. Red Cross volunteers have provided food for the camp and first aid and medical care to the injured. This newest violence reportedly did not have links to religious groups or communal violence in Jos.

NIGERIA BECOMES LARGEST SUB-SAHARA IMPORTER OF U.S. RICE

¶7. (U) During the past year, Nigeria has become the largest importer of U.S. rice in Sub-Saharan Africa, with imports and purchases climbing to 40,000 tons, with an estimated value of 25 million dollars. This figure represents the highest amount in 25 years. In the process, Nigeria has surpassed nearby Ghana as the largest buyer of U.S. rice in Sub-Saharan Africa and has become the largest export market worldwide for U.S. long-grain, brown rice. While Thai rice exports continued to dominate the Nigerian market, a reduction in duties on milled and brown rice (from 109 percent to 30 percent and 5 percent, respectively) and competitive pricing have allowed U.S. rice to re-enter the Nigerian market.

¶8. (U) Embassy Abuja and ConGen Lagos collaborated on this telegram.

SANDERS